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FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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FWS TO EXPAND ALASKA SALMON RESEARCH INTO OFFSHORE WATERS

Research on Alaska salmon in offshore areas of the North Pacific, including Bering Sea, will be conducted this summer by the Fish and Wildlife Service, according to plans announced today by Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay. This work will involve the catching and tagging of salmon in waters north and south of the Aleutian Islands in an area centered at 175° west longitude, which runs through Atka Island.

Objectives of the program are to determine if there is an area of intermingling between American and Asian stocks of salmon, and if this is so, to define the area of intermingling. If it is found that they do not intermingle, then the line of demarcation between the stocks will be determined. In addition to tagging, other scientific data will be collected to add to the knowledge of the life history, racial composition, etc., of North Pacific salmon. An important part of the project will be the development of suitable fishing gear to catch salmon on the high seas in a live condition suitable for tagging.

FWS Director Albert Day explained that the project was a part of the preliminary salmon research begun last summer in connection with the International Convention for the High Seas Fisheries of the North Pacific Ocean, signed at Tokyo, May 9, 1952, subject to ratification by the United States, Canada, and Japan. The Convention establishes the meridian of 175 degrees West longitude as a provisional line of demarcation between salmon of American and Asiatic origin. Both Japan and Canada have agreed to abstain from fishing for salmon east of this line in the Bering Sea. A protocol to the Convention provides for scientific investigation to determine the location of a permanent line of demarcation. Although the Convention has not yet entered into force, the Fish and Wildlife Service has already initiated research in the area. During the summer of 1952, a Service biologist accompanied a Japanese salmon expedition which operated in the Bering Sea west of 175 degrees West longitude to collect data bearing upon the distribution of salmon. The work is scheduled to begin June 1 using the Service's research vessel John N. Cobb.

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